

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1

LOS ANGELES TIMES
12 SEPTEMBER 1979

U.S. Aides Meet on Cuba Troops

Position Prepared for 2nd Soviet Meeting

BY ROBERT C. TOTH

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Top national security officials conferred at the White House Tuesday on the presence of Soviet combat troops in Cuba, preparing for the second round of a face-to-face exchange on the issue today.

Attending the session were Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance, CIA director Stansfield Turner, Defense Secretary Harold Brown and Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser. Brzezinski briefed the President after the meeting.

Later, Vance had lunch with former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who joined in demands that the United States insist on Moscow removing its 2,000 to 3,000 combat troops from Cuba.

Kissinger told newsmen after the luncheon that if the Soviets remove the brigade, this action should not be used as an argument in favor of ratification of the strategic arms limitation treaty with Moscow. He said Moscow should not be rewarded for canceling out "something it should never have done in the first place."

Reports circulated here that Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin, in his Monday meeting with Vance, took a softer line than a Pravda editorial had on Monday. The Communist Party newspaper called American reports of the brigade's presence "totally groundless."

Whatever the tone and substance of Dobrynin's comments during the two-hour discussion, they have left some American officials with the impression that the problem can be solved, according to informed sources. There was no indication of what solution might emerge. Several members of Congress have demanded the full withdrawal of the Soviet force.

Carter and Vance have said that maintenance of the "status quo" is not acceptable but have not spelled out what changes in the nature or purpose of the Soviet brigade would satisfy them.

Vance said after his meeting with

Kissinger that "it is in the interest of both nations that this matter be satisfactorily resolved, and that it be satisfactorily resolved in the near future."

Earlier in the day, Vance met at the White House with Turner, Brown and Brzezinski to review the Soviet position.

The White House session, which forced Vance to cancel a scheduled breakfast meeting on SALT II with about 20 senators, appeared to reflect the pressure felt in the Administration to resolve the prickly, embarrassing issue of the Soviet presence in Cuba as soon as possible.

Congress continued putting heat on the White House Tuesday, with Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), an anti-SALT senator of considerable influence, charging that two diesel-powered Soviet submarines now in Cuban hands could be used to mine U.S. harbors—thereby cutting off some U.S. oil imports—or to infiltrate Communist agents and arms throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

He called in a Senate speech for removal of the Soviet brigade, for removal of Soviet-made "high-performance, ground-attack aircraft" in Cuba, and for a prohibition on the Soviet supply to Cuba of additional submarines and any other naval vessels that might threaten the United States.

"This is a brand new military capability for Cuba," Jackson said of the submarines. He predicted that Moscow would supply attack boats as well.

The White House and the State and Defense departments declined official comment on Jackson's statement. However, the presence of the two submarines, built 20 years ago, has been known to the Pentagon for some time and defense officials have expressed no great concern over them.

Brzezinski told a group of editors last Friday that the Soviets already have provided Cuba with missile patrol boats and antisubmarine patrol boats, as well as submarines.

"What's the difference between Soviet subs being able to mine our waters or Soviet-made Cuban subs doing it," said a Pentagon strategist Tuesday. "We'd just sweep them away, if it came to that."

Kissinger prefaced his remarks on the Soviet brigade by pledging his "full support" to Vance in the "very delicate negotiations" with the Soviets now under way.

"This is not a partisan issue," said Kissinger, who served in the Republican administrations of Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford. "The issue is of national interest."

"The presence of a Soviet combat unit in Cuba is unacceptable," he said. "How the presence is ended is the subject of negotiations and I don't think I ought to go into tactics."

"We should not think the end of the combat unit is the end of the problem with Cuba," he added, alluding to the larger "geopolitical problem" of Cuban forces acting as Soviet proxies in military adventures.

"The presence of the combat unit is an argument against (ratification of) SALT," he said. "But removal of the troops is not an argument for SALT."

He said the Soviets should not be rewarded because they "stop doing something they should never have done in the first place."